

Appl. No. 09/781,755

**In the Claims:**

Please amend the claims as follows

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1. (Twice Amended) A system for verifying the purchase of a retail item  
by a customer comprising:

B<sup>1</sup>

- a label associated with the retail item, said label lacking a post-purchase machine-readable indicia;
- a point of sale encoding device, said encoding device providing a machine-readable post-purchase indicia to the label during purchase by the customer; and
- a detecting device for analyzing the label to determine whether the post-purchase machine-readable indicia is present.

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14. (Twice Amended) A method for verifying the purchase of a retail item  
by a customer comprising:

B<sup>2</sup>

- providing a label associated with the retail item, said label lacking a machine-readable post-purchase indicia;
- encoding a machine-readable post-purchase indicia to the label by a point of sale encoding device when the item is purchased by the customer; and
- analyzing said label with a detecting device to determine whether the machine-readable post-purchase indicia is present.

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